



HR1149

LRB098 21521 GRL 60090 r

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, Approximately 35,000 wild African elephants were
3 brutally slaughtered in 2012 because of the demand for their
4 tusks, which contain ivory; and

5 WHEREAS, The United States is the world's second largest
6 market for ivory; and

7 WHEREAS, Illegal ivory is smuggled into the United States
8 through a number of international airports, which include
9 Chicago's O'Hare International Airport, on a routine basis; and

10 WHEREAS, The wild African elephant population has declined
11 from 1.2 million in 1980 to just 420,000 in 2012 and Central
12 Africa's forest elephant populations have declined by 75% in
13 the last decade due to illegal poaching for ivory; and

14 WHEREAS, Elephant ivory currently sells for about \$3,000
15 per kilogram, representing a value of \$20,000 per elephant; and

16 WHEREAS, With an estimated value between \$10 billion and
17 \$20 billion per year, the illegal wildlife trade is a major
18 trans-national crime run by professional criminal networks and
19 is strongly linked to other trans-national organized criminal
20 activities, such as narcotics, weapons, and human-trafficking;

1 and

2 WHEREAS, There is significant evidence that illegal trade
3 in high-value wildlife parts, including elephant ivory, is
4 being used as a source for financing terrorist organizations
5 and armed groups that including the Lord's Resistance Army,
6 al-Shabaab, al-Qaeda, and Sudanese militias; and

7 WHEREAS, The State Department of the United States has
8 provided that criminal organizations' involvement in wildlife
9 trafficking perpetuates corruption, threatens the rule of law
10 and border security in fragile regions, and destabilizes
11 communities that depend on wildlife for biodiversity and
12 eco-tourism; and

13 WHEREAS, In 1989, the Convention on the International Trade
14 in Endangered Species (CITES) banned the international
15 commercial trade in ivory; in the United States, the import,
16 export, interstate trade, and commercial sale of ivory removed
17 from the wild after the ban (and in some cases even earlier) is
18 illegal, with a few exceptions; and

19 WHEREAS, In many cases, documented ivory predating the 1989
20 ban (called "preconvention" ivory) can be traded; however, laws
21 vary by state and by species; and

1 WHEREAS, A major challenge to effective enforcement is that
2 parallel legal ivory markets serve as a cover for illegal ivory
3 from recently killed elephants, as it is extremely difficult to
4 distinguish between legal ivory, including antiques and
5 illegal ivory, once it is within our borders; in addition,
6 counterfeit ivory certifications have flooded the market,
7 making parallel legal ivory markets a contributing factor to
8 elephant poaching across Africa; and

9 WHEREAS, With limited enforcement, minimum penalties, and
10 elaborate forgery schemes, traffickers are able to get illegal
11 ivory into the United States market; and

12 WHEREAS, As long as demand for ivory remains high and
13 enforcement effort is low, the legal trade will continue to
14 serve as a front and criminal syndicates will continue to drive
15 elephant poaching across Africa, which will lead to the
16 extinction of wild elephants in Africa; and

17 WHEREAS, The United States is the world's second largest
18 importer and market after China for ivory sales; because
19 current laws allow for the legal trade in certain ivory
20 products and include broad loopholes and exemptions, there is
21 significant illegal trade in ivory in the United States; and

22 WHEREAS, As the United States reaches out to China, the

1 world's largest ivory consumer nation, and other countries to
2 crack down on the illegal ivory trade, it is important for the
3 United States and for the State of Illinois to stop the trade
4 within our own borders and lead by example; and

5 WHEREAS, States have an opportunity to lead the way during
6 this critical time for Africa's elephants by establishing
7 moratoria on the sale of all elephant ivory and ivory products;
8 and

9 WHEREAS, States can eliminate the significant enforcement
10 challenge posed by the legal ivory trade, raise consumer
11 awareness, reduce poaching pressures on elephants, and set a
12 critical example for other state and federal lawmakers as well
13 as other countries; and

14 WHEREAS, Brookfield Zoo, managed by the Chicago Zoological
15 Society, the Lincoln Park Zoo, and Shedd Aquarium are
16 accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums, operate
17 significant wildlife conservation programs locally and around
18 the world, and are the most visited cultural destinations in
19 Illinois; and

20 WHEREAS, Chicago Zoological Society, Lincoln Park Zoo, and
21 Shedd Aquarium are partnering with the Wildlife Conservation
22 Society, an international conservation organization that has

1 launched "96 Elephants", a campaign named for the number of
2 elephants killed each day in 2012 by poachers, to raise
3 awareness about the alarming rate at which wild African
4 elephants are being poached because of the demand for ivory and
5 to generate action in support of elephants and raise consumer
6 awareness to encourage state and federal lawmakers to eliminate
7 the significant enforcement challenge posed by the legal ivory
8 trade; therefore, be it

9 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
10 NINETY-EIGHTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that
11 we recognize the work of Brookfield Zoo, Lincoln Park Zoo, and
12 Shedd Aquarium to raise awareness about the importance of
13 enacting a moratoria on all ivory sales in the State of
14 Illinois; and be it further

15 RESOLVED, That suitable copies of this resolution be
16 delivered to Dr. Stuart Strahl, President and CEO of the
17 Chicago Zoological Society and Director of the Brookfield Zoo;
18 Kevin Bell, President and CEO of Lincoln Park Zoo; and Ted A.
19 Beattie, President and CEO of Shedd Aquarium in recognition of
20 their support of a United States moratorium on illegal ivory,
21 bolstering protection of African elephants, and educating the
22 public about the link between ivory consumption, international
23 terrorist organizations, and the elephant poaching crisis.